**Cultural Diversity Sensitivity Group – First Grade (Or other elementary)**

**Title of Session #1:** Different and Similar

**Brief Summary of Session:** In this session, the counselor will read the book "Marshmallow" by Clare Turlay Newberry, in which a rabbit and a cat become best friends dispite their differences. Students will discuss the book, focusing the conversation on how the characters learned about the other's differences, and learned to value the differences in friendship. The connection will be made between the cat and rabbit in the story, and how we all need to learn about one another's differences. We can become friends with people who are different from us, even if it is scary at first.

**Theoretical Orientation:** This session focuses on Adlerian theory as well as cognitive behavioral theory. Adlerian theory stresses the importance of helping clients realize that they are social beings, and they must have their social roles in mind as they learn skills (Corey, 2012). As a group that helps students learn about respecting people's differences and display cultural sensitivity (both social ideas), this theory ties in well. The session also uses cognitive behavioral theory, because we are focusing on changing students' beliefs about certain groups of people. Cognitive behavioral therapy teaches clients to understand how their preconceived thoughts and beliefs impact their actions (Corey, 2012). This group will teach that students' preconceived cultural biases or beliefs impact their tendencies to segregate.

**Specific Group Technique:** For this session, the specific group technique is bibliotherapy. Erford (2010) lists bibliotherapy as a particularly effective technique to use in order to help students process their feelings. Bibliotherapy also affords the possibility of tying in the book's subject matter to material the students are learning elsewhere in school (Erford, 2010). I chose bibliotherapy for this session because the students will be able to first discuss the characters' feelings and actions before turning inward to discover their own. In this way, the students will hopefully be able to approach the idea of differences among people from a more objective stance at first.

**Structure:** This psychoeducational group is a six session closed group that will meet for six consecutive weeks. There will be six students in the group. Group will take place in the school counseling office from 1-1:30 each Tuesday during first grade gym. It will be offered twice a year.

**Materials/ Media:** "Marshmallow" by Clare Turlay Newberry, pre- and post-test handout.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others

                                                           PS: A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

                                                           PS:A2.2 Respect alternative points of view

                                                           PS:A2.4 Recognize, respect, and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**State of Virginia, Grade 1 English Standards:

                                                           1.1       The student will continue to demonstrate growth in the use of oral language

                                                                    a. Listen and respond to a variety of media, including books, audiotapes, videos, and other age-appropriate materials.

                                                           1.9      The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of fiction and nonfiction

                                                                    f.  Identify characters, setting, and important events.

                                                                    h. Identify the topic or main idea.

**Objectives**: 1. After discussing similarities and differences, students will be able to articulate the importance of valuing differences by listing three unique and different aspects of their own culture. (ASCA Standards P:A1.6, PS:A2.2, PS:A2.4)

2. After reading a story, students will be able to correctly identify one major theme from the story. (State standards 1.1(a), 1.9 (f, h))

**Assessments:** Counselor observations, student articulation of similarities and differences in various cultures, student recognition of major theme in the story.

**Procedures/Instructional Strategy:**

Step 1. Open the group with welcome, overview of previous session and goals, review confidentiality agreement.

Step 2. Pass out "preposttest1" handout (attached), have students fill it out, and collect.

Step 3. Explain that we will read a story together. Encourage students to listen for the main theme and important events.

Step 4. Read "Marshmallow", in which the characters avoid and are afraid of one another at first, but then learn to value each other's differences and become friends.

Step 5. Ask students to discuss the book. Favorite part? Why did was the cat afraid of the rabbit? Etc.

Step 6: Process students' reactions to the book and relate to our own relationships in and out of schools.

Step 7. Ask students to talk about instances where they didn't understand another person, and how they reacted to the experience.

Step 8. Process students' responses about previous experiences.

Step 9. Ask students how the cat and rabbit were different. How are you different from other people in your class?

Step 10.  Discuss unique differences of each student, share with the whole group.

Step 11. Process list of contributions.

Step 12. Close the group by summarizing discussion and processing information with students.

Step 13. Pass out post-test and collect.

Step 14. Assign homework for next week: students are be "detectives" and seek out a student from another culture and learn one unique contribution of their culture.

**Homework:** Students are asked to be "detectives" and talk to a student from another cultural group and ask them about their culture. Students should be able to tell the group next week about one unique contribution from their new friend's cultural group.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** This session will be the second group meeting, after the introductory session. Students have met one another and established their reason for being in the group. At this stage, students are possibly still uncomfortable with sharing personal details and beliefs. The book reading is designed to break the ice by having students first discuss the characters, rather than themselves. The content of this session could produce some upset feelings, since we will be discussing sensitive cultural topics, and students might start off by focusing on differences as a negative. The counselor should work to redirect such comments to model talking about differences as a positive thing.

**Title of Session #2:** Getting to Know You

**Brief Summary of Session:** In this session, students will be partnered with another student to conduct brief, 5 minute interviews. Students will be given a list of questions to ask each other about cultural background and experiences, and will be invited to invent their own questions. After interviews are completed, students will take turns introducing their partner to the group, explaining the unique contributions of that person's cultural group. Specfically, students will identify one cultural value that they were not aware of prior to interviewing the student. Then, as a group, we will discuss the cumulative effect of so many different contributions and values.

**Theoretical Orientation:** This session utilizes Adlerian and cognitive behavioral therapies. Adlerian therapy has been proven effective in counseling students (Erford, 2010), and is particular useful for this session because of its focus on a democratic approach to the counseling process. In this session, the group members will be responsible for conducting the peer interviews and also for developing the content of the group discussion after the interviews are complete. This is an Adlerian idea. In addition, cognitive behavioral therapy is appropriate for this session because the focus is on changing students' previously held beliefs about certain groups by replacing them with new, correct information about various cultures. Replacing inaccurate beliefs with more rational ones is a key focus of cognitive behavioral therapy (Erford, 2010).

**Specific Group Technique:** The interview technique that is used in this session is derived from the behavioral technique of shaping. In shaping, group members are encouraged to practice a new skill, step-by-step, in the group session in order to help them learn how to implement this skill in their everyday lives (Erford, 2010). The interview is designed to be a practice to teach students how to ask peers about their own culture, which will hopefully be replicated in their everyday lives outside of group. The homework assignment emphasizes this practice.

**Structure:**This psychoeducational group is a six session closed group that will meet for six consecutive weeks. The group will have six members. Group will take place in the school counseling office from 1-1:30 each Tuesday during first grade gym. It will be offered twice a year.

**Materials/ Media:** "Getting to Know You" interview questions sheet, pre- and post-test 2 sheet.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):**Standard A: Students will acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others

                                                           PS:A2.2 Respect alternative points of view

                                                           PS:A2.4 Recognize, respect, and appreciate ethnic and cultural diversity

**Core State Academic Standard(s):**State of Virginia Mathematics Standard for Grade One:

                                                           1.2          The student will count forward by ones, twos, fives, and tens to 100 and backward by ones from 30.

**Objectives:** 1. After an interview session with a classmate, students will demonstrate increased cultural awareness and sensitivity by sharing with the group five unique contributions of their partner's culture. (ASCA Standards PS:A2.2, PS:A2.4)

2. After listing the groups' individual cultural values on the board in groups of 5, students will count by fives to determine the cumulative number of cultural values represented in the group. (State Standard 1.2)

**Assessments:** Counselor observation of interactions during interview, student ability to articulate partner's unique contributions and values, as well as student ability to calculate the total number of values represented by the group by counting by fives.

**Procedures/Instructional Strategy:**

Step 1. Open the group by reviewing previous session, reviewing group rules, and reinforcing the confidentiality agreement.

Step 2. Pass out pre-test sheet, have students fill it out, and collect.

Step 3. Break students up into partners. Have partners sit facing one another. Be sure that each partner is from a different cultural group.

Step 4. Explain that we are going to do an interview activity. Students should ask their partners about their culture's values and contributions, and write them down so that they can share them with the group.

Step 5. Pass out "Getting to Know You" sheet.

Step 6: Have students complete the interview process (about 5 minutes per student, then switch).

Step 7. Bring the group back together. Go around the group and ask each student to tell the group about 5 values or contributions that their partner shared. Write these on the board so students can add them up by counting by fives.

Step 8. Talk as a group about the values and contributions presented. What did we learn as a group?

Step 9. Process the discussion.

Step 10. Close the group by summarizing discussion and processing information with students.

Step 11. Pass out post-test, and collect.

Step 12. Assign homework: students are to write a journal entry for the following week. They are to write about instances at home or at school where they witness or act out of cultural insensitivity, and to come up with solutions or alternative actions that would display more cultural sensitivity.

**Homework:** Students will journal every day about instances of cultural diversity insensitivity and sensitivity throughout the week.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** This session will be in the working stage, and will be the forth session. Students are more vulnerable with each other in this activity, so they might be shy or reserved at first in the interviewing process. Students should be encouraged by the counselor that confidentiality will be upheld and that sharing about our own cultures is essential if we are to develop cultural diversity sensitivity.

**4)  Student discusses the importance of supporting theoretical orientations and techniques in school counseling prevention and intervention programs.**

It is important to have supporting theoretical orientations and techniques in all school counseling programs. As part of the preparation and planning process, counselors should determine their theoretical framework (or frameworks), in order to guide their facilitation of the group (Erford, 2010). For example, if a counselor does not have a theoretical orienation, it will be difficult to manage the group in an organized and logical manner. Rather, the counselor should determine an appropriate theory for the particular program and work within the guidelines of that theory. This provides needed structure and the availability of applicable resources in the literature.

In addition, techniques are extremely important to have when planning and implementing a school counseling prevention or intervention program. Counselors use techniques to structure their program, and to provide counselees a sense of direction in the session (Corey, 2012). Without specific techniques, counselors may find themselves floundering, not knowing where to take the group. Techniques, which have been established by professionals and empirically tested for their ability to assist the counseling process, will provide ways for the counselor to reach students and encourage them to move beyond the surface of their emotions and reactions.